Today, in a remote village in Darfur, a young woman named Aisha is packing up to leave town. While the situation has started to quiet down, there are rumors that the same militia group that killed her father and mother last year might be planning another raid. Aisha is not sure of her destination, but she is desperate to get her younger brother and sister to a safe place.

There are many such stories, each with a different twist. Lives in the balance, lives needlessly lost. In a rural area of Zambia, a young man named Mitambo has watched many of his friends grow sick or die from HIV/AIDS, and worries about the future of his village. In the Gaza Strip, a young man named Hassan mourns the loss of his younger brother, unable to understand what drove him to become a suicide bomber. In Cincinnati, a young man named Steven is grieving at the news that his older brother was killed in Fallujah.

Here in Constitution Hall is a young woman named Susan. In the six years since she began her university training, the international landscape has changed radically. The terrorist attacks of September 2001 marked the beginning of her undergraduate sophomore year. The split at the UN Security Council over Iraq´s suspected weapons of mass destruction became a case study for her junior year. Developments in North Korea and Iran have made for lively classroom debates throughout her graduate studies. Susan is looking forward to receiving her diploma today. She plans a career in international relations, and is eager to make her world a safer place.

Aisha, Mitambo, Hassan, Steven and Susan. All these young people are in their twenties. Their names are fictional, but their circumstances are very real. And now that you have heard their stories, I would like to talk to you about the major challenge of the 21st century: how to re-shape our approach to security in a way that takes into account the hopes – and the fears – of each of these young people, and in fact of all their fellow human beings around the world.

Let me say at the outset that, to do this, we must think and act differently. We must globalize our concepts of security. We must develop a system of security that fits with these concepts. But most importantly, we must act accordingly.

The story of the past few generations can be read as a series of efforts to build institutions that could resolve conflicts peacefully and, in parallel, to limit the scope of war and prohibit certain types of weapons.

After the devastation of the First World War, the League of Nations was formed. But it could not prevent the rise of Adolf Hitler, or the atrocities that claimed millions of lives.

After World War II, the United Nations was born. Principles for maintaining international peace and security were agreed upon. Economic and social development for all. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Centralization of the authority to use force, in the UN Security Council. And limitations on the conditions under which States could justify using force in self-defence.

The United Nations and its institutions have had many successes, in regulating various aspects of our increasingly interconnected lives: international trade, civil aviation, postal standards, labour practices, and so forth.

But the overall success of the United Nations as a body is measured most often in terms of its performance in keeping the peace – particularly its role as a peacemaker in terms of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, and as a peacekeeper in the aftermath of conflicts. Here the UN record is mixed. The UN can point to some success stories, such as in the case of Namibia, in which sustained and active UN engagement led to the country´s transition from occupation to independence. Or the case of East Timor, which through similar UN involvement has become a free and independent nation.

The problem is how to make such successes the norm. In too many cases, such as the Middle East or South Asia, we find ourselves incapable of finding solutions to conflicts that have gone on for decades. And too often we fail to act when intervention is clearly needed – such as during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, when nearly 1 million people were slaughtered in just over 3 months.

What about our scorecard on limiting the scope of war or prohibiting the most destructive types of weapons? Here the record is also mixed. As far back as the Hague Conventions of 1899, efforts were made to limit the effects of armed conflict — through, for example, protecting people who are not part of hostilities, and prohibiting methods and means of warfare that cause unnecessary suffering.

The *Biological Weapons Convention of 1975* and the *Chemical Weapons Convention of 1997*, which outlawed the production and use of these weapons, were major steps forward.

But the irony is that we still have not outlawed the "big guns": nuclear weapons. Under the 1970 *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* – the five countries that had nuclear weapons at the time – China, France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States – committed themselves to "e;negotiate in good faith" effective measures for the elimination of nuclear weapons and, in the meantime, to share peaceful nuclear technology with any other countries party to the Treaty. In return, those other countries agreed not to pursue nuclear weapons.

On the one hand, efforts to control the spread of nuclear weapons through the NPT treaty regime can be viewed as a remarkable success. With the exception of India, Israel and Pakistan, every country in the world has joined the NPT. The vast majority of NPT members have stood by their commitments. And the number of nuclear warheads has been reduced by more than 50 percent from its Cold War peak.

On the other hand, in recent years, we seem to have come to an impasse, and many see the NPT regime as faltering. You might say that, while we started on the right track, we have lost our sense of direction. Today we have eight or nine countries that possess nuclear weapons – and more than 20 other members of alliances that continue to rely on these weapons for their security. Some countries are actually announcing programmes for modernizing their stockpiles, and some have even spoken of the possibility of using such weapons – all the while insisting that they are off-limits to others.

This is a dilemma worth reflecting on. As an international community, we have no difficulties in cooperating when it comes to regulating shipping, coordinating the use of airwaves, or jointly fighting epidemics. But when it comes to how to resolve our differences, our approach dates back to the Stone Age, still rooted primitively in who carries the biggest

club.

In 1974, I was like you today – waiting to receive my graduate diploma from the New York University School of Law.

It is now over thirty years later. My generation has had its successes and failures. But I also believe we have learned a number of lessons and insights that you may reflect on as you prepare to take over.

The first lesson is that international peace and security cannot be achieved through business as usual with our existing norms and institutions. Clearly, these norms and institutions – whether the NPT or the UN Security Council – are far from perfect. They need to be strengthened in a variety of ways.

But beyond the re-engineering of these norms and institutions, we need a complete change of mindset. Most importantly, our approach to security can no longer be centred on the idea of "Us Versus Them". It must instead be anchored on the idea of the unity of the human family.

Our world today is marked by asymmetry. Twenty percent of the world´s population consumes 80 percent of the resources. And 2 out of every 5 people still live on less than $2 per day.

Given that SAIS just completed its "Year of Energy", let me explain this asymmetry in another way. The average American has 1,800 watts at his or her disposal – powering everything from air conditioners to iPods. By contrast, your average Nigerian has to make do with only enough power for a single 8-watt light bulb.

In the past, with little travel or communication between countries and peoples, this sort of imbalance could endure for centuries.

This brings us to Lesson Number Two: in our era of globalization, this imbalance is no longer sustainable. Television and the Internet have made this imbalance glaringly visible. In some cases, that imbalance in living conditions is leading to a sense of injustice – a fertile breeding ground for conflicts and the emergence of extremist groups. And increasingly, the insecurities of one country or region become the insecurities of all.

In the final year of World War II, President Roosevelt said, "We have learned that our own well being is dependent on the well being of other nations far away." This reality is now ever more apparent. Chaos mathematicians sometimes describe what is known as "the butterfly effect" – the notion that a butterfly flapping its wings in Washington DC can affect the initial conditions of a chain of meteorological events that ultimately bring about, say, a sandstorm in the Sahara. Today, one can equally speak about the same butterfly effect of insecurity. The recent terrorist attacks in Europe, which could be traced back to the sense of humiliation in parts of the Middle East, are a case in point. Security is no longer as simple as building another wall. Globalization is forcing us to realize that, whether we like it or not, we are all in the same boat.

When we look at nuclear weapons through this lens, Lesson Number Three becomes

obvious. Nukes breed nukes. As long as some nations continue to insist that nuclear weapons are essential to their security, other nations will want them. There is no way around this simple truth. Here, too, the playing field will need to be leveled, one way or another.

As recently as a few decades ago, the control of nuclear technology and nuclear material was a sensible strategy for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are still working vigorously – and must continue to work – to maintain and improve those controls. The proposal to bring under multinational control those facilities capable of producing weapon-usable nuclear material – a proposal endorsed in various forms by many world leaders – is just one such improvement.

But ultimately, as more countries gain advanced engineering capabilities, these controls, in and of themselves, are no longer enough. Advances in communication have simply made it too easy to share knowledge and technology. And regardless of how diligently we work to block the illicit trade in nuclear technology to nations – or worse, to extremist groups who seek this technology – there will be limits to how much can be controlled.

When it comes to nuclear weapons, we are reaching a fork in the road. Either we must begin moving away from a security system based on nuclear weapons, or we should resign ourselves to President Kennedy´s 1960s prediction of a world with 20 to 30 nuclear-weapon States. Efforts to control the spread of such weapons will only be delaying the inevitable – a world in which each country or group has laid claim to its own nuclear weapon. Mutually Assured Destruction will once again be the absurd hallmark of civilization at its technological peak.

Is that really the world we want to live in?

To date, no one has seriously taken up the challenge of developing an alternative approach to security that eliminates the need for nuclear deterrence. But only when such an alternative system is created will nuclear-weapon States begin moving towards nuclear disarmament. And only when nuclear-weapon States move away from depending on these weapons for their security will the threat of nuclear proliferation by other countries be meaningfully reduced. And finally, only when both groups of countries shift their focus – from a security system based on the build-up of armaments to a security system that addresses the root causes of insecurity, ranging from poverty and repression to unresolved conflicts – will we be able to improve global security.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to develop this alternative system of collective security. The good news is that, as tough as it may sound, this is not "Mission Impossible". As graduates of the School of Advanced International Studies, you are equipped with the right skills and the broad outlook to take on such a challenge. The globalization of security will require creative diplomacy, innovative technology and above all leadership.

Unfortunately, I cannot tell you the exact nature of such an alternative system. But I can tell you some of the features that will be essential to its success.

At its root, this new system of collective security requires a basic belief that we are all part of one human family.

This requires a re-arrangement of our global priorities. In 2004, the nations of the world spent over $1 trillion on weapons, and less than 10% of that amount – a mere $80 billion – on official development assistance. Experts tell us that, for an additional $65 billion per year, we could cut world hunger in half, put programmes in place for clean water worldwide, enable reproductive health care for women everywhere, eradicate illiteracy, and provide immunization for every child.

With those kinds of numbers, it doesn´t take a nuclear scientist to figure out a smarter approach to improving our security situation. To quote President Eisenhower, speaking with far-sighted vision in 1953: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies... a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

If we can focus on giving our less fortunate neighbours the opportunity to raise their living standards – the chance to compete, to regain their sense of dignity and self-respect – the likelihood of conflict will immediately begin to drop.

This new system of collective security should incorporate a deterrence based primarily on the interdependence of nations, through the exchange of people, ideas and goods. Armed conflict must become too costly to be anything but the very last option. We must find ways to make nuclear weapons relics of the past.

Secondly, this alternative system of collective security must include institutions capable of maintaining international peace and security. The United Nations Security Council now holds this responsibility. The Security Council must be representative of the global community it serves. It must be structured in a way that makes it agile in its responses to crises. It must be consistent in its actions. It must have the resources to carry out its mission. And it must make it a high priority to resolve conflicts that have continued to fester for decades. We should not forget, however, that at the end of the day, international institutions are constellations of states, and states are made up of people who should be the focus and the drivers of any system of security.

Third, we should initiate a series of dialogues to promote mutual understanding and respect. To correct misconceptions. To understand and address causes of hostility. These dialogues should be tailored especially towards young people – young people like Aisha, Mitambo, Hassan, Steven and Susan – because a mindset of mutual respect and understanding will be essential to the effort of your generation to put in place an equitable global security system.

In the 1960s, Timothy Leary coined the famous phrase: "Turn On; Tune In; Drop Out" – calling on the younger generation to disengage from society and seek enlightenment through psychedelic drugs.

I would call on you to do exactly the opposite, to engage and become part of the solution – in other words, "Turn Back; Tune In; Reach Out". Turn Back from an approach to security that relies on nuclear deterrence. Tune In to the security needs of your fellow human beings around the globe. And Reach Out to make those needs your own, so that the dream of peace and security can finally become a reality. Every one of you can make a difference.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Class of 2006: the future rests in your hands. May God bless you with the wisdom and courage necessary to lead us to a safer and more humane world.

Thank you.

More DG Statements »